



**TENNESSEE CHARTER SCHOOLS
ANNUAL REPORT TO
THE TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
As Required in T.C.A. 49-13-120**

**Submitted by:
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Tennessee Department of Education**

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Introduction

Public charter schools are defined in Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) 49-13-104 as “a public school in the state of Tennessee that is established and operating under the terms of a charter agreement and in accordance with this chapter.” These schools must be authorized by the local education agency (LEA), which then enters in to a charter agreement with the sponsor of the public charter school to operate for an initial period of five years. State and local education funds follow the charter school students to their respective schools. Charter schools are entitled to any federal education funds that they are eligible to receive. Charter schools must meet the same accountability requirements for achievement as traditional public schools.

Subsequent to the passage of the *Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002*, the state’s first four charter schools opened in the fall of 2003 and collectively served approximately 462 students. In the fall of 2004, they were joined by three additional schools, and three of the original four schools each added a new grade level. Together, the seven schools served approximately 1,019 students in 2004-05, which more than doubled the number of Tennessee children enrolled in charter schools. During this school year, each of the four original schools saw an increase in the number of their students who were eligible for free and reduced price meals.

As the law was originally passed, Section 49-13-106 of T.C.A. provided for the creation of three types of charter schools formed to:

1. Provide alternatives for students in schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), as defined by the state’s accountability system.
2. Address the unique needs of students eligible for special education services as identified by federal guidelines.
3. Provide local school systems the option to work in concert with the state’s public higher education teacher training institutions.

Charter schools opened in 2004 were all “Type I” charter schools. However, with the amendments to the law passed by the General Assembly in 2005, these types of schools were abolished to be replaced with a defined prospective student population eligible to attend a charter school.

This report provides information about Tennessee charter schools listed in the table below for the 2004-05 school year, the second year in which they operated in the state. In addition to overview information about each charter school, general information about the overall charter schools program is provided.

Cohort 1 Schools Opened Fall 2003	
Circles of Success Learning Academy	Memphis
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences	Memphis
Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering	Memphis
Smithson Craighead Academy	Nashville
Cohort 2 Schools Opened Fall 2004	
City University School of Liberal Arts	Memphis
STAR Academy	Memphis
Yo! Academy	Memphis

**OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL
TENNESSEE CHARTER SCHOOLS
OPERATING 2004-05**

Circles of Success Learning Academy

867 S. Parkway, E.
Memphis, TN 38106
Phone: 901-322-7978
Fax: 901-322-7993

Website: <http://www.memphis-schools.k12.tn.us/schools/circlesofsuccess.aca/index.htm>

Opened: 2003

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools

Sponsored by: The Works, Inc.

Principal: Dr. Ingrid Haynes-Mayes

Grades Served 2004-05: K-3

An additional grade will be added each year through grade 5.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 72

Student Demographics: 100% African American
91.6% Eligible for free or reduced price meals (an increase from 66.6% in 2003-04)

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 3 Teachers: 4 Para-educators: 3 Staff: 1
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:18

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 30% culminating in an associates degree
- 50% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 10% culminating in a master's degree
- 10% culminating an a doctorate degree

Sixty percent of the staff has worked at the school for the two years since its inception, and 40% for only one year.

School and Community Characteristics: Circles of Success Learning Academy (COSLA) is an urban school located in south Memphis and housed in the Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church. The community in which the school is located has been identified as a target zone for city improvement because of its large number of low-income families, poor housing conditions, high rate of public assistance, and low levels of student academic achievement . The school utilizes the *Success for All* reading program and emphasizes cross curricular integration of reading and writing. COSLA was started as the result of planning done by Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church to identify alternatives for helping children at risk of failing in traditional school settings to improve their academic achievement. It was determined that an entire school rather than a summer or after-school program could best address identified needs.

Mission: The mission of the school is to educate the whole child to function productively at the middle and secondary school levels; to holistically encircle the child with the models, methods, and academic means of success. The school will provide an alternative route to academic and social success for K-5 students who are at risk of failing to reach their full potential in traditional school settings.

Memphis Academy of Health Sciences

230 Henry Ave.

Memphis, TN 38107

Phone: 901-525-9091

Fax: 901-525-9038

Website: www.mahsmemphis.com

Opened: 2003

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools

Sponsored by: 100 Black Men of Memphis

Principal: Mr. Curtis Weathers

Grades Served 2004-05: 6-7

An additional grade will be added each year through grade 8.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 180

Student Demographics: 100% African American

75% Eligible for free or reduced price meals (an increase from 76% in 2003-04)

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 1 Teachers: 12 Para-educators: 0 Staff: 1
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:20

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 64% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 36% culminating in a master's degree

Approximately one-third of the faculty and staff have worked at the school for the two years since its inception, with the remainder having worked there only one year with the addition of a new grade level.

School and Community Characteristics: Memphis Academy of Health Sciences (MAHS) is located north of downtown Memphis in an old, high poverty area of the city and is housed in Caldwell Elementary School. The community around the school is changing as families exit the neighborhood. The curriculum at MAHS is standards-based, interdisciplinary and focuses on a health sciences theme. Interest in starting a charter school such as MAHS began a decade ago. Parties to the discussion about starting a school realized that the charter school movement would grow, and the billion dollar expansion of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital caused them to recognize the need for health care professionals. Due to their interest in the educational future of the city, 100 Black Men of Memphis, Inc. assumed the role of sponsor for the school.

Mission: The Memphis Academy for Health Sciences will equip students with the necessary skills to be competitive in the 21st Century. Our students will demonstrate the ability to read, write, speak and calculate with clarity and precision. Successful transition to high school will be a primary goal for all. The Academy's structured yet caring environment will help to instill in our students a desire to participate passionately and responsibly in their own learning and growth, their families, and the life of their communities.

Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering

20 S. Dudley St.

Memphis, TN 38103

Phone: 901-448-6273

Fax: 901-448-6266

Website: <http://www.memphisscienceacademy.org/>

Opened: 2003

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools **Sponsored by:** Memphis Bioworks Foundation

Principal: Mr. Tommie Henderson

Grades Served 2004-05: 7-8

An additional grade will be added each year through grade 12.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 251

Student Demographics: 97% African American, 2.3% Caucasian, 0.7% Latino
68% Eligible for free or reduced price meals (an increase from 65% in 2003-04)

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 4 Teachers: 12 Staff: 2
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:21

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 56% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 44% culminating in a master's degree

Thirty-three percent of the staff has worked at the school for the two years since its inception, and 67% for only one year.

School and Community Characteristics: Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering (MASE) is located in downtown Memphis in space on the former campus of Baptist Hospital. It is in the heart of the medical center district and is a part of the Bioscience Education Center, a component of the new UT/Baptist Research Park, which is to play a critical role in economic development. The curriculum at the school emphasizes math, science, and technology. MASE originated as the visions of Dr. Steve Bares, President of the Memphis Biotech Foundation, and Mr. Tommie Henderson, then a teacher at East High School and now MASE principal, converged. Mr. Henderson had a desire to expand a concept of steering a cohort group of inner-city youth through a rigorous science program into postsecondary education, and Dr. Bares was seeking to start a school that would serve as the centerpiece of a revitalized biomedical research center.

Mission: The mission of the Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering is to produce lifelong learners, critical thinkers, effective communicators, and productive members of the global community through focus on state and national standards, strong industrial partnerships, numerous research opportunities, continuous technological improvements, and a staff committed to social awareness, excellence, and personal responsibility. Students will be committed to the idea that success in any form is the result of hard work, self-respect, and perseverance.

Smithson Craighead Academy

3307 Brick Church Pk.

Nashville, TN 37207

Phone: 615-228-9886

Fax: 615-228-9799

Website: <http://www.smithsoncraighead.org/index.html>

Opened: 2003

Authorized by: Metro Nashville Public Schools **Sponsored by:** Project Reflect

Principal: Ms. Rosilyn Harrington

Grades Served 2004-05: K-4

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 148

Student Demographics: 99% African American 1% Caucasian
100% 89 % Eligible for free or reduced price meals (an increase
from 89% in 2003-04)

Faculty and Staff: Administrative 2 Teachers 10 Para-educators 5 Specialists 4
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:15 K-3 1:18 Grade 4

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 5% culminating in a high school diploma
- 21% culminating in associate's degree or some college coursework
- 32% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 42% culminating in a master's degree

Sixty-eight percent of the staff has worked at the school for the two years since its inception, and 42% only for one year.

School and Community Characteristics: Smithson Craighead Academy (SCA) is an urban school located in Nashville. It is housed in a freestanding traditional looking school building that previously housed a Seventh Day Adventist School. The school seeks to provide students with a strong foundation in basic academic skills that will enable their success throughout their school career. SCA originated from the result of work done by founder Sister Sandra Smithson through Project Reflect, an organization working with at-risk children in Nashville in order provide early intervention, values education, and basic instruction.

Mission: The mission of Smithson-Craighead Academy is to build basic academic skills as a foundation for the ongoing success of every child.

City University School of Liberal Arts

4748 Winchester Rd.

Memphis, TN 38118

Phone: 901-368-9890

Fax: 901-368-9894

Website: <http://www.cityuniversityschool.org>

Opened: 2004

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools

Sponsored by: The Influence1 Foundation

Principal: Dr. Lowell Winston

Grades Served 2004-05: 9

An additional grade will be added each year through grade 12.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 121

Student Demographics: 98.3% African American .85% Caucasian .85% Latino
78% Eligible for free or reduced price meals

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 2 Teachers: 8 Part-time Counselor: 1 Staff: 1
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:20

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 62.5% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 12.5% culminating in a master's degree
- 25% culminating beyond a master's degree

One fourth- of the faculty and staff have over 20 years experience working in schools, and one-half have less than 11 years of experience.

School and Community Characteristics: City University School of Liberal Arts is located at Greater Middle Baptist Church. The school targets students who have completed the terminal grade at a low performing middle school or who transfer from a low performing high school. CUSLA collaborates with the College Board in order to provide students with the curricular foundation needed to succeed in post secondary education. The schools college-oriented focus is reinforced by references to teachers as "professors" and students as "scholars."

Mission: The City University School of Liberal Arts will prepare its students with the necessary skills to be twenty-first century scholars and citizens. A college preparatory high school with a liberal arts core and operated as a Center of Excellence for Student Development, CUSLA will provide academically rigorous and socially enriching educational opportunities for its students. Upon graduation, these scholars will be better prepared to enter college as intellectually sophisticated citizens with a vigor for learning.

Soaring Toward Academic Readiness (STAR) Academy

3260 James Rd.

Memphis, TN 38128

Phone: 901-387-5050

Fax: 901-387-0798

Website: <http://www.staracademycharter.com>

Opened: 2004

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools

Sponsored by: Golden Gate Development Corporation

Principal: Dr. Kia Young

Grades Served 2004-05: K-2
An additional grade will be added each year through grade 5.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 116

Student Demographics: 98% African American 1% Caucasian 1% Hispanic
90% Eligible for free or reduced price meals

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 3 Teachers: 6 Para-educators: 3 Staff: 1
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:20

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 33% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 66% culminating in a master's degree or higher

Thirty-three percent of the faculty and staff have more than 20 years experience working in schools, and 44% report having worked in a school based setting for six to ten years.

School and Community Characteristics: STAR Academy is located in the Raleigh area of Memphis. In the same zip code area of the school, there are three elementary schools that have been identified as high priority, with an additional ten high priority schools in the general area. This area is comprised of 70% African American residents, 1% Asian residents, 4% Hispanic residents, and 25% Caucasian residents. The community is in transition, and seventy-five percent of the households within a one-mile radius of the school location are low income or below the poverty level.

Mission: The mission of STAR Academy is to become a beacon in the community as a school of excellence that offers a balanced, coherent and academically rich curriculum in an atmosphere that is family-oriented, community supported, developmentally appropriate, safe and nurturing for kindergarten through fifth grade children from low-performing schools in Memphis, so that they may become productive human beings who strive for greatness and make meaningful contributions to society.

Yo! Academy of Visual and Performing Arts

2140 S. Third St.

Memphis, TN 38109

Phone: 901-947-5353

Fax: 901-947-5341

Website: <http://yoacademy.com>

Opened: 2004

Authorized by: Memphis City Schools

Sponsored by: Yo! Memphis Foundation

Principal: Dr. Marie Milam

Grades Served 2004-05: 10-12
Ninth grade to be added 2005-06.

School Year 2004-05 Enrollment: 131

Student Demographics: 100% African American
100% Eligible for free or reduced price meals

Faculty and Staff: Administrative: 2 Teachers: 7 Psychologist: 1 Staff: 2
Teacher-Student Ratio: 1:22

Faculty and staff members' educational attainment includes:

- 8% culminating in an associates degree
- 8% culminating in a bachelor's degree
- 59% culminating in a master's degree
- 25% culminating in a doctorate degree

Four employees have between six and ten years of experience working in a school setting, while the remainder have less than six years of experience.

School and Community Characteristics: Yo! Academy is located in an industrial warehouse area of southwest Memphis. Academic classes were initially held off-site at a church, while visual and performing arts classes met at the facility housing the city's Youth Opportunity Movement Program. By mid-year all classes were at the same site. The school operates a year round calendar that includes one Saturday per month. Yo! Academy seeks to serve students from the 20 high schools in Memphis that are identified as failing to make adequate yearly progress. The communities where these schools are located reflect a lower than normal median household income and a 48.5% poverty rate. Unemployment among residents of the communities is quite high, particularly as compared with the remainder of the city and county. Pervasive poverty and unemployment, which often result from low educational attainment, are cited as the root of many of the communities' problems.

Mission: The mission of the Yo! Academy is to create an academically challenging, safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment for at-risk students from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds that will foster academic achievement through a focus on visual and performing arts.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE OVERALL CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Tennessee Department of Education Support for Charter Schools

During the second year of operation of charter schools in our state, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) expanded its efforts to lend support and technical assistance to these new schools. Support for charter schools is coordinated by the Director of Charter Schools and Choice, who is an employee assigned to the Office of Federal Programs in the Division of Teaching and Learning. Though this office coordinates technical assistance, various staff members throughout the department render service to the charter schools based on their specific needs.

Tennessee is interested in utilizing chartering as a means to increase school choice options for at risk students and ultimately to increase their academic achievement, by cultivating high quality charter schools that:

- Focus heavily on academic achievement of all students, yet are mindful of the holistic needs of children;
- Are governed responsibly by a dedicated, knowledgeable, capable, and ethical board;
- Are continuously focused on quality and exhibit this by systematically assessing their operations, utilizing data to drive decision making, and ultimately achieving measurable performance outcomes;
- Offer unique learning opportunities based on proven instructional methodologies,
- Have leaders and administrators dedicated to maximizing student success via ethical leadership;
- Are fiscally sound, appropriately expend and account for public funds, and comply with laws and regulations, including an annual audit;
- Employ qualified faculty and staff and provide them with high quality, mission-driven professional development;
- Effectively engage parents, families, and the community in the life of the school;
- Protect the health, safety, and rights of students.

One new strategy in the quest to support charter schools capable of meeting this quality definition is the formation of a statewide charter school advisory board by the TDOE. This group will be composed of both external and internal stakeholders for the purpose of promoting the charter school concept, increasing dialogue among various charter school stakeholders, providing input and advice regarding charter schools, and informing policy decisions. A list of potential members has been prepared, and invitations to serve on the board will be forthcoming in late spring with an initial meeting soon to follow.

As is evidenced by charter school research, appropriately serving special needs children enrolled in charter schools is a matter of concern for the TDOE, the schools, their authorizing school districts, parents, and other stakeholders. As one means to address this concern, the TDOE applied and was selected to participate in the TA Customizer project coordinated by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). Early in 2006 a team comprised of twenty-one members representing the TDOE, Memphis City Schools, Metro Nashville Schools, the Tennessee State Board of Education, and the Charter School Resource Center of Tennessee met to discuss the issue of serving special needs children in charter schools. The focus of the team's work was to customize, for use in Tennessee, two guidance documents for serving special needs children in charter schools. These publications were previously developed by NASDSE and include one for charter starters and one for charter authorizers.

Many charter schools across the nation struggle with issues related to finance and fiscal management. In order to assist Tennessee charter schools with such matters, Department of Education fiscal consultants and internal auditors have visited the schools in order to provide them with technical assistance. The Department has also designated a part-time staff person to assist with accounting for Federal Charter Schools Program Grants and with the state financial reporting that is required under Tennessee's charter school law.

In the interest of gaining new information and ideas germane to strengthening charter schools in our state, Tennessee has participated in multiple national charter school events. These include:

- The National Association of Charter School Authorizers Conference held in October 2005 in Denver, Colorado
- The State Education Agency Charter Schools Program Directors Meeting sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in December 2005 in Washington, DC
- The 2006 National Charter Schools Conference in February 2006 in Sacramento, CA
- The National Charter Schools Program Showcase during National Charter Schools Week in May 2006 in Washington, DC

These meetings have all provided a valuable forum for exchanging ideas not only within our state, but with representatives from other states with a longer history of chartering and/or with a charter school law and infrastructure similar to Tennessee's.

Several previously established activities to benefit charter schools continued into this second year of operation. These include:

- Electronic and written communication to charter school principals, board chairs, grant contacts, and other staff members in order to provide new or clarifying information.
- Inviting charter school faculty and staff members to attend conferences and professional development events sponsored by the Department.
- Providing technical assistance upon request for a variety of topics.
- Offering a two-day grant workshop to successful charter school applicants in order to inform them about the opportunity to apply for Federal Charter Schools Program Grants and about other topics pertinent to successfully opening and operating a school. (See Appendix A for an agenda from this meeting.)
- Offering a one-day workshop for entities interested in submitting a charter school application to their local education agency. This workshop provided information about finances, legal issues, and the appeals process for denied applications. (See Appendix B for an agenda from this meeting.)

In addition to working with charter schools, the Tennessee Department of Education is working to provide assistance to the local education agencies that authorize them. Staff members have met and communicate as needed with charter school representatives from Memphis City and Metro Nashville Schools.

The Department continues to contract with the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis to conduct charter school studies, including a second year evaluation of charter schools and a second year achievement study. Information produced in these reports has been valuable in identifying areas of need or concern, so that steps can be taken at the school level and if appropriate, at the local or state level, to address these. (Copies of the most recent CREP reports are submitted with this document.) In addition to producing these studies, another component of CREP's work was to provide technical assistance to each charter school. CREP staff worked with school leaders to develop "implementation benchmarks" in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and organization and assessed progress toward these benchmarks with the staff.

Charter School Funding

As is specified in T.C.A. 49-13-112, local boards of education allocate one hundred percent of the state and local education funds to the charter school on the per pupil expenditure of the LEA. Funds are to be spent according to the budget submitted in the charter agreement, or as otherwise revised by the public charter school governing body.

In addition to state and local funding, charter schools receive federal funds if they meet the eligibility criteria for doing so. Those that are eligible receive Title I funds under *No Child Left Behind*. In addition each school in operation applied for and received a grant under the Federal *Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant*. Tennessee is currently in the fourth year of a \$7.5 million dollar *CSP* grant. Through a competitive process, the charter schools applied for planning and implementation funding, and each school received up to \$506,000 over a period of two years. Charter schools that receive these funds are required to conduct an enrollment lottery if they have more students desiring to attend the school than slots available. In March of 2006 the TDOE submitted a new grant application to the U.S. Department of Education seeking new *CSP* funds and is awaiting a response regarding the status of the application.

Facilities funding is still one of the most critical needs charter schools experience. Lack of access to government funding sources has been a problem. Charter starters note difficulties in securing 20-year bonds to fund charter schools when they are only approved for a window of five-years. Tennessee remains ineligible to apply for federal grant funds under the *State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program* because the State does not have a law authorizing per-pupil facilities aid for charter schools. The amendment regarding Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) made to T.C.A. 49-13-124 by the General Assembly in 2005, yields little substantive impact to the ability of charter schools to benefit from these bonds, as the chartering authority is usually reluctant to endorse the submission of these bond applications to the local taxing authority, and since charter schools themselves have no taxing authority.

Charter schools may also be funded by grants, gifts, or donations from private sources. This varies by school, but one source of funding of note remains the Hyde Family Foundations, which provided start-up funding to multiple schools. Monetary and in-kind contributions have also been made to some of the charter schools from businesses such as Federal Express, Wal-Mart, the University of Tennessee, and Saint Francis Hospital. There is some conversation by charter school proponents regarding donor fatigue of these initial supporters and about the need to cultivate new sources of philanthropic funding for charter schools.

Research Findings

As mentioned above, the Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis completed two new studies regarding Tennessee Charter Schools. These included: (1) *Second Year Evaluation of Tennessee Charter Schools 2004-05*, and (2) *Student-Level Analysis of Year 2 (2004-2005) Achievement: Outcomes for Tennessee Charter Schools*. Information from this research is included throughout this report, with some overall findings from the *Second Year Evaluation of Tennessee Charter Schools 2004-05* by Ross, McDonald, and Bol highlighted below. Findings for individual charter schools are available in the accompanying report.

Question	Findings
What is the frequency of usage of various traditional and alternative (student-centered) instructional strategies in the charter schools compared to national norms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct instruction was the most prevalent instructional orientation in all charter schools and occurred at rates typically higher than or comparable to the national norm. ▪ Four of the seven charter schools utilized student-centered instruction, including cooperative learning and the teacher as facilitator, to a moderate degree. ▪ Six of the schools implemented higher-order strategies at moderate levels. ▪ While technology use in the three of the four original schools increased from their first year of operation, the fourth original school and the three new schools exhibited infrequent technology use.
What is the school climate at the charter schools and how does the climate compare to national norms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School climate was a notable strength at all of the charter schools, except one, which still received a moderate rating. ▪ Even though three of the four cohort I schools experienced a decrease in School Climate Inventory ratings, their overall mean ratings were still high and compared favorably to national norms.
To what degree and levels of quality are the goals and strategies (in five major categories—curriculum, instruction, organization, support, and evaluation) of the charter school being implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As might be expected, the schools in their second year of operation had reached more advanced levels of benchmark implementation than those in their first year. ▪ However, levels of implementation across most indicators were in either the first or second phase of development across schools an years. ▪ In multiple cases, the need to revisit and revise benchmarks was apparent.

What are teacher reactions to and experiences in the charter school? What are the adequacy and quality of professional development and resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive reactions regarding the school mission or educational program were expressed by charter school teachers. ▪ However, they were less enthusiastic about available resources and support. In fact within the first cohort of schools, teacher ratings in this area declined from the previous year. ▪ Teacher responses in six of the seven schools expressed concern regarding meeting the requirements of special needs students. ▪ Responses regarding adequacy and quality of professional support were mixed.
What are parent (caregiver) reactions to and experiences with the charter schools? (Much data regarding this question were collected via the use of a parent questionnaire, to which response rates were relatively low.) 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In all schools, parents expressed strong overall satisfaction. ▪ Some areas where parents were less than totally satisfied included issues related to the school facility, transportation, and supplemental activities or programs. ▪ The level and extent of parent participation did not seem to differ depending on whether the school was in its first or second year of operation.

Six recommendations were issued as a part of this report. These pertain to the charter schools as a group, rather than individual schools, and they are:

1. Charter schools could more closely align instructional practices with their school improvement plans and incorporate more research-based practices linked with student achievement outcomes
2. Order and discipline could be improved at most schools, with school leaders re-evaluating policies related to student conduct, discipline procedures, and attendance policies.
3. Benchmark documents need to be revised to better align with objective indicators and available data.
4. Schools should make improvements in meeting the requirements of special needs students, including the possibility of hiring extra faculty and staff with expertise in special education.
5. Efforts to develop supportive, collaborative partnerships with the school district and external partners should continue.
6. Increase active parent involvement or participation at the charter schools.

The *Student Level Analysis of Year 2 (2004-05) Achievement Outcomes for Tennessee Charter Schools* report by Ross, McDonald, McSparrin-Gallagher, and Slawson builds upon the first report titled *Student-Level Analysis of Year 1 (2003-2004) Achievement: Outcomes for Tennessee Charter Schools* report by Ross, McDonald, and Gallagher. This second year report presents student-level achievement results for two groups of Tennessee charter schools. These include the original four charter schools that opened in 2003, which are Circles of Success Learning Academy, Memphis Academy of Health Sciences, Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering, and Smithson Craighead Academy, and the three charter schools that opened in 2004 including City University School of Liberal Arts, STAR Academy, and Yo! Academy.

In the interest of conducting a rigorous and valid analysis of charter school student achievement, a matched program control design at the student level was utilized at five of the six schools. At each of these five schools, each student enrolled in a charter school was matched with a control student of the same or a similar demographic who attended the same or a similar district school in the year prior to the former's charter school enrollment. Because the sixth school was comprised of primary elementary grades only, pretest scores were unavailable for the majority of charter school students and matched pairs. Therefore, for this school, a comparison group was established by randomly selecting students who were identical in race and poverty status to the charter school students and who attended comparable neighborhood schools.

The achievement measures employed for grades 2 to 8 included Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program: Achievement Test (TCAP/AT) scores for the 2004-05 school year. For students in grades 9-12 during 2004-05, Tennessee Gateway Assessments in Algebra I, English 10, and Biology were used as outcome assessments.

While the overall achievement analyses for the second year schools yielded mostly positive effects, those for first year schools resulted in equivocal outcomes. Results for the second year Memphis schools were relatively consistent and clearly positive, depicting effect sizes that are all positive and at levels that would be considered educationally strong and meaningful by researchers. Of 18 school grade-level cohort x TCAP/AT analyses completed, 12 were statistically significant, implying that students attending these charter schools are performing better than their peers who remained in traditional schools.

To encapsulate the achievement outcomes found in this study, a brief achievement profile of each of the six schools is provided below:

Second-Year Schools

Circles of Success in Learning Academy (COSLA). Significant positive effects were evidenced in grade 1 Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics, and suggestive positive effects in grade 2 Mathematics. No effects were found in grade 3.

Memphis Academy of Health Sciences (MAHS). Significant and moderate-to-strong positive effects were found across all grades 6 and 7 cohorts in both Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering (MASE). Significant or suggestive positive effects were found across all grade 7 and 8 cohorts in both Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. Effects were relatively more pronounced in Reading/Language Arts than in Mathematics, and for the eighth grade-Year 2 cohort than for the Year 1 seventh and eighth grade cohorts.

Smithson-Craighead Academy. No reliable effects were found in either Reading/Language Arts or Mathematics in grade 3 or grade 4. Slight directional advantages were evidenced for SCA students in Reading/Language Arts in both grades and in Mathematics in grade 4.

First-Year Schools

City University School of Liberal Arts. Only Algebra I could be analyzed; no effects or trends were found.

Star Academy. Significant or suggestive positive effects were found in both Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Yo! Academy. No effects were found in English 10. No effects were found in Algebra I in grade 11, but a nonsignificant disadvantage in Algebra I was indicated in grade 10.

As was the case with the year one analysis of academic achievement, the evaluators urge caution in interpreting the results given that because of student choice and other constraints, they were unable to conduct a randomized experimental study that eliminated family interest or involvement as an influential factor and because some grade-level matched pair samples were subject to sampling error due to their small size.

Analysis of achievement over time will continue to yield a more accurate assessment of school effectiveness. As the body of data available for analysis grows, so too should the confidence in and statistical significance of it.

Conclusion

In Tennessee, as in the rest of the country, the charter school movement continues to grow. In fall 2005, five additional charter schools opened, bringing the total number of charter schools operating in the state to twelve. Additional applications have been approved to open two schools in 2006-07. If each of these opens, a total of fourteen charter schools will be in operation in Tennessee next school year.

The Department of Education is committed to providing the resources and services necessary to help all students succeed. Whether Tennessee children are enrolled in charter schools or traditional schools, they are still “our children” and deserve the highest quality public education possible. As the number of charter schools continues to grow, staff members will partner with charter school stakeholders and continue to build the infrastructure necessary to meet this goal within the context of creating and supporting high quality charter schools

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Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, compiled in *Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 13*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANT WORKSHOP
September 15, 2005
Airport Marriott Hotel
Nashville, TN

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 7:30 | Registration/Continental Breakfast/Networking |
| 8:00 | Welcome and Introductions
Sandra Gray, Director of Charter Schools and Choice
Tennessee Department of Education |
| 8:15 | Greetings and Remarks from the Assistant Commissioner
John W. Scott, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Teaching & Learning
Tennessee Department of Education |
| 8:30 | Tennessee Charter School Application
Charter School Implementation Resources
Sandra Gray, Director, Charter Schools and Choice
Dr. Carol Groppe, Consultant, Charter Schools and Choice
Tennessee Department of Education |
| 9:15 | BREAK |
| 9:30 | Overview of Charter School Law and Legal Issues
Christy Ballard, General Counsel
Tennessee Department of Education |
| 10:30 | Charter School Applications Appeals Process
Rich Haglund, General Counsel
Tennessee State Board of Education |
| 11:15 | LUNCH |
| 11:45 | Lessons Learned: Charter Starters Panel Discussion
Sister Sandra Smithson, Administrator and Founder
Smithson-Craighead Academy
Mrs. Elise Reese Evans, Administrator and Founder
Southern Avenue Charter School of Academic Excellence
Questions and Answers |
| 1:00 | Charter School Finances and Application Budget Document
David Huss, CPA, Executive Director, Local Finance
Tennessee Department of Education |
| 4:15 | Wrap-up and Evaluation |
| 4:30 | Adjournment |

APPENDIX B

CHARTER SCHOOL GRANT WORKSHOP
March 15 & 16, 2005
Old English Inn-Ballroom, Jackson, TN
AGENDA

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

8:30 Registration

9:00 Opening Session

Sandra Gray, Director of Charter Schools and Choice
 John Scott, Assistant Commissioner of Teaching and Learning
 Tennessee Department of Education

10:00 Break

10:15 Serving Special Education Students in Charter Schools

Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner of Special Education,
 Tennessee Department of Education

11:30 Lessons Learned Luncheon - Panel Discussion:

Tommie Henderson, Memphis Academy of Science & Engineering
 Sister Sandra Smithson, Smithson Craighead Academy, Nashville
 Sidney White, STAR Academy, Memphis

12:30 Breakout Session #1

Year 1 Schools	Building Codes & Occupancy Requirements for Schools Terry Singleton, Supervisor West Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office
Year 2 Schools	Financial Reporting Dialogue David Huss, Executive Director of Local Finance Sandra Gray, Director of Charter Schools & Choice Tennessee Department of Education

1:30 Break

1:45 Breakout Session #2

Year 1 Schools	Finance Primer David Huss, Executive Director of Local Finance, Tennessee Department of Education
Year 2 Schools	Charter School Issues Forum Sandra Gray, Director of Charter Schools & Choice Tennessee Department of Education

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

- 8:00 Continental Breakfast/Networking**
- 8:30 Charter School Program Application and Contracts Overview**
Sandra Gray, Director of Charter Schools & Choice
Tennessee Department of Education
- 9:30 Charter School Research and Technical Assistance**
Dr. Steven Ross, Executive Director
Aaron McDonald, Research Director
Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis
- 10:20 Break**
- 10:40 School Improvement Planning**
Yvonne Allen, Director, Memphis/Shelby Field Service Center
Tennessee Department of Education
- 11:30 Networking Luncheon**
Please sit at the table # corresponding with your nametag.
- 12:15 *No Child Left Behind*, Accountability, and Charter Schools**
Dr. Julie McCargar, Executive Director of Federal Programs
Tennessee Department of Education
- 2:30 Break**
- 2:45 Legal Issues Primer**
Christy Ballard, General Counsel
Tennessee Department of Education
- 4:45 Wrap-up and Evaluation.**